## MUTUAL INSTRUCTION AT THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN.

The following is the substance of the address read by Mr. Raimbach at the meeting of students mentioned in our last:—

Fellow Students,—You are aware that this school was established for the twofold purpose of educating a class of designers who should be able successfully to compete with the foreign ornamentist; and a sufficient number of skilled draughtsmen and pattern drawers to assist in carrying out the works of the first-mentioned. It is generally allowed that the latter object has been successful, and that not only this school, but the branch schools also, have produced first-rate draughtsmen in every department. But there is still the impression, among all who are interested in the subject, that the schools have altogether failed as schools of design. It is still asked, where are the designers the schools were established to supply—who were to drive French and German patterns out of the British market—who were to raise the commercial value of our manufactures, by introducing beauty of design even in the meanest article of use or ornament, and to elevate the people by familiarising them with that elegance of form, harmony of colour, and fitness for use combined, which are only found among the productions of a refined age and nation?

Although the school has been established above ten years, it is yet, perhaps, too much to expect so desirable an effect. But are we nearer our object than ten years ago? The patterns, as well of textile fabrics as of such articles as paper-hangings, furniture, and pottery, are as ordinary, not to say as ugly, as ever,—and, as regards the latter, a substitute for the "willow pattern" is yet to be devised. If it be impossible to walk through any of our great thoroughfares without being struck with the great improvement displayed in every kind of silk, satin, shawl, or muslin; who will say that the revision of the tariff has not had more effect in producing that improvement than the schools of design? Who will deny that, where the manufacture is native, the pattern is foreign? And when we hear of any nobleman's or gentleman's mansion being decorated with more than ordinary splendour, it is sure to have been done under the superintendence of some Herr Von Homberg, assisted by foreign artists and workmen, brought over from the continent at an enormous expense. The same practice is applied to club-houses, play-houses, palaces, and exchanges: our churches we adorn ourselves,—with whitewash.

And here let me remind you that I do not dispute the superiority of the foreign ornamentists (though I think the preference for their works is supported rather by fashion than by judgment), but I will maintain that there is no reason that this superiority should continue. It does not exist in *fine art*, why should it in art applied to manufactures? That many difficulties have interposed to prevent the attainment of the chief object for which the school was established, I am well aware. The greatest obstacle is, doubtless, the very general ignorance of the students as to the manufacturing processes to which their designs must, more or less in every case, be adapted. This circumstance renders the designs produced in the school so usually unfitted for manufacture, as to make them practically useless. It matters little enough that a design possesses every artistic excellence, if it be incapable of adaptation to a manufactured article; and while our manufacturers, by importing French patterns (in Manchester alone to the amount of above 20,000*l.* per annum), can obtain exactly what is suited to their purpose, it is not to be expected they will purchase what is not. This deficiency in the course of instruction was at one time attempted to be supplied. In 1843 a course of practical lectures on manufactures was delivered by Mr. Cowper, of King's College. But although regularly and numerously attended, they were discontinued. They comprised calico, silk, and letter-press printing; hand, power, plain, and figured weaving; pottery and porcelain, engraving and sculpture by machinery, type and stereotype-founding and the framing of machinery,—some of them rather foreign to the purpose for which they were intended.

The annual report for 1845 still alludes to the great want of practical and technical knowledge, and proceeds to say, "It is remarked generally of all the schools, that instances continually occur of students who possess superior natural endowments, with competent knowledge of art and power of execution, but who from deficiency of that technical knowledge which can only be effectually learned by actual experience in the factory and workshop, cannot procure from manufacturers the employment they seek; while others who have found means to add this requisite information to their artistic knowledge readily obtain engagements."

I differ in opinion from this report, in so far that I think *much* practical knowledge may be obtained without attending the factory or working at the loom. A good lecture, with proper diagrams, can often explain a process which is quite unintelligible in actual operation; and a man might stew himself a long time in an engine-room before he got so clear a knowledge of the principles of action in the steam-engine as may be derived from a careful perusal of Dr. Lardner's book; and it is my firm belief and conviction that this difficulty can be best overcome by the students themselves, and that the formation of this association supplies a means not only for accomplishing this, but for the removal of other difficulties which have impeded the operations of the school ever since its commencement.

Our association has been formed under circumstances peculiarly favourable, and at a time when public attention, fatigued with the excitement of foreign revolutions and rebellions, and relieved from the fear of domestic disturbances, is returning to the contemplation of our own progress as a nation, the revision of our laws, the improvement of our manufactures, the advancement of our arts. The commendatory letter received from Mr. Deverell, on the part of the council of the school, and the interest taken in its welfare by the masters, are circumstances on which we may well congratulate ourselves. The free use of this noble room, in which to hold our weekly meetings; the fact of being surrounded by examples of the highest class in every department of ornamental art of every age and from all countries; the power of reference to a valuable collection of books of prints and specimens, and the extended access to the lending library which has been accorded to such of our members who, in the preparation of papers or essays, wish to consult works on similar subjects, are further evidences of the favour with which we are viewed by the council and authorities. It is, therefore, incumbent on us to exert ourselves for our own advancement, and that we are both able and willing to do so is proved by the list of papers in preparation, which has been posted on the door of this room, among which are several on practical manufacturing subjects.

But our association has further objects in view; there is the management of the specimens of art belonging to the school, and the formation of a catalogue: the collection of materials under a uniform system will be a suitable employment for our younger members. The want of such a catalogue has long been felt, not only by the students but by others. The school being open to the public, strangers may occasionally be seen, who, on entering, stare vacantly around, at a loss where to begin, apparently confused by the very heterogeneous arrangement of objects before them, and who, after a very short visit, depart neither improved nor gratified; whereas, with a proper arrangement and a cheap descriptive catalogue, an afternoon might be both profitably and amusingly passed by the artisan, tradesman, manufacturer, or artist.

The formation of a museum of ornamental art and other projects are so dependent on the extension of the accommodation provided by Government, that it would be premature to speak particularly of them; but that the attainment of them will be much accelerated by the exertions of this association is unquestionable. Only let each member do his best, let each freely impart the knowledge he possesses (and remember that there is nothing we learn so thoroughly as that we teach to others), and we shall see our association gaining strength and power, extending branches to the provincial schools, and rendering this school, as it should be, the best market for the manufacturer in want of designs—the shortest road to a knowledge of ornamental art in all its provinces, and a means of placing our nation above all others in art applied to manufactures, as it is now in every other branch of civilization.

## AN EXAMPLE FOR THEIR "BETTERS."

### REDCLIFFE CHURCH TOWER.

For some time past St. Mary Redcliffe Church, Bristol, has been kept open for visiters the whole day, free of any fee. A box is placed in a convenient position to receive donations towards the restoration from such as are disposed to aid a good work. There is also a book in which the donor may register the gift. A few weeks ago, three working men, wayfarers, examined the building in all its parts with evident delight, and on quitting left this entry in the subscription-book—"From three journeymen carpenters, on their way from London to Cork, seven shillings and six pence."

All honour to them for the good and right feeling which prompted the act, and may it serve as a stimulus to others!

The following report, which has appeared in the various Bristol papers, tells its own story:—

"To the Vicar, Churchwardens, and Vestry of the Parish of St. Mary Redcliff, Bristol.

"Gentlemen,—By direction of your churchwarden, I beg leave to report to you that my attention being directed to the condition of the spiret, or pinnacle, as it is more commonly called, of the south-east turret on the tower of the parish church, I carefully examined the same on Monday last, and found it to be in an imminently insecure and dangerous state.

"This applies not only to the spiret, with its finial, but to the upper part of the turret itself: the stones composing it are eroded and crushed, it is rent in various places, and appears to have settled over slightly towards the body of the church, while the finial and top of the spiret have fallen towards the spire.

The whole is in such a condition that, although it might remain as it now stands for some time, a high wind, the slightest discharge of the electric fluid, or the further failure of some of the stones, which might happen at any moment, could scarcely fail to precipitate it, for the most part on to the roof of the nave, and probably cause most serious damage to the inside of the church, and to the organ immediately below.

"It is with much reluctance that I recommend any step that will make more evident the ruin which is rapidly falling on this tower—a tower with scarcely its equal for beauty in the kingdom. The threatening state of the turret, however, forbids hesitation, and makes it my duty to advise that the upper portion of the spiret should be taken down, and the lower parts, at the foot, pinned up with cement, so as to render apparent any further movement.

"The other turrets are in a miserable state of disruption and decay, but do not seem to threaten immediate danger.—I have the honour to subscribe myself, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

"George Godwin, Architect.

"Brompton, Middlesex, Feb. 14, 1849."

Part of the turret has since been taken down.

## GALVANIZED IRON.

We have before us a specimen of galvanized iron taken from a cistern which has been erected but two years. It is full of holes and utterly destroyed. We received, sometime since, from another quarter, a similar example of failure, but forbore from mentioning it. Remembering the high opinion of this material expressed by Professor Brande and others, and that it is now being very extensively used in lieu of lead and copper, it is desirable that the public should have the means of judging between that which will last and that which will not. One Company has addressed a letter to us, asserting that in their process no admixture of *tin* is used, and leading to the inference that it is where this second material is used that the result is unsatisfactory. What is wanted, however, is the guaranteed actual experience of disinterested parties, and this we shall be glad to receive.

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